WE CLAIM:

1.     A method of processing material comprising

providing a material list for a product,

loading the material list into a job manager,

5     moving the material list into a spreadsheet,

selecting a field in the spreadsheet,

downloading the selected field of data to an optimizer, and

processing the material.

10

2.     The method of claim 1 further comprising

editing data in the selected field prior to the downloading step.

15     3.     The method of claim 1 wherein the material list is a cut list for a product.

4.     The method of claim 1 wherein the processing step includes the step of operating a saw to cut stock material according to data received by the optimizer.

20

5

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the material list includes a cut list of wood dimensions for a product.

5    6. The method of claim 1 further comprising

sorting data in the spreadsheet by field prior to the downloading step.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising

10    performing a function, such as multiplying or dividing, on selected data in the spreadsheet prior to the downloading step.

8. An apparatus for carrying out material processing comprising

15    a computer including a job manager program configured to receive a data file including a material list for a product, to display the material list in a spreadsheet, and to permit editing, and sorting data by field,

a machine configured to process stock material including an optimizer capable of determining an optimal processing sequence according to a specified material list, and

20    a downloading mechanism enabling transfer of selected data from the job manager to the optimizer.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the machine is selected from the following group: radial arm saw, rib fence, upcut saw, metal tube cutter, boring machine, punch press, vertical router, metal shearer, mortiser, and tenoner.